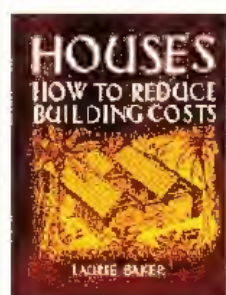


# ARE SLUMS INEVITABLE



COSTFORD

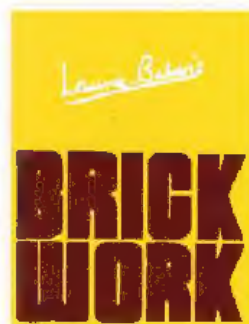
## Other Titles in the Series



HOUSES  
HOW TO REDUCE  
BUILDING COSTS



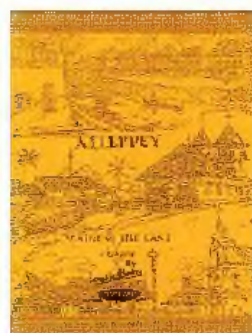
MUD



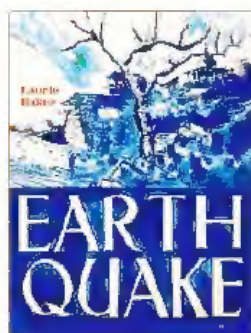
BRICK  
WORK



RURAL  
HOUSE  
PLANS



ALLEPPEY  
VENICE  
OF THE EAST



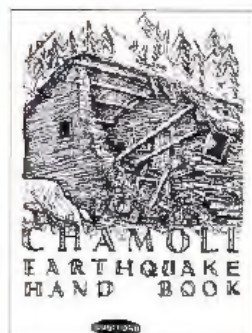
EARTH  
QUAKE



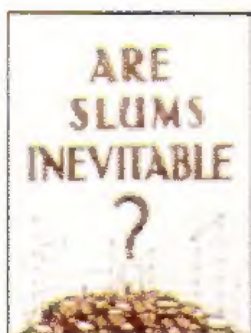
RURAL  
COMMUNITY  
BUILDINGS



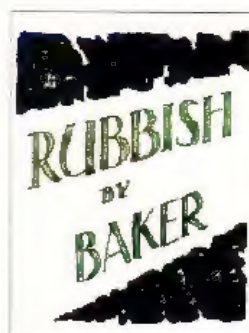
COST REDUCTION  
FOR PRIMARY  
SCHOOL BUILDINGS



HOUSES  
HOW TO REDUCE  
BUILDING COSTS



ARE  
SLUMS  
INEVITABLE



RUBBISH  
BY  
BAKER



A MANUAL OF COST CUTS  
FOR STRONG  
ACCEPTABLE HOUSING

**COSTFORD**

Centre of Science and Technology For Rural Development

Ayyanthole, Thrissur, Kerala, India. PIN-680 003

Phone: 91-487-2365 988, 2366 388.

Fax: 91-487-2366 388

Laurie Baker's

**ARE  
SLUMS  
INNEVITABLE**



Published by

**COSTFORD**

**Centre of Science and Technology  
For Rural Development**

**COSTFORD**

English

ARE SLUMS INEVITABLE ?

Laurie Baker

First Published in 1997

Reprint - May 2014

Published by

**Centre of Science and Technology  
For Rural Development**

Ayyanthole, Thrissur, Kerala, India-680 000

Phone: 91-487-2365 988, 2366 388.

Fax: 91-487-2366 388

Cover & Illustrations  
**Laurie Baker**

Price: ₹. 50/-

---

Printed at: MUDRA Sivakasi, Ph: 9447410514



# SLUMS

ARE A SHAME  
AND A DISGRACE  
NOT TO THOSE WHO HAVE  
TO LIVE IN ONE

BUT TO US -

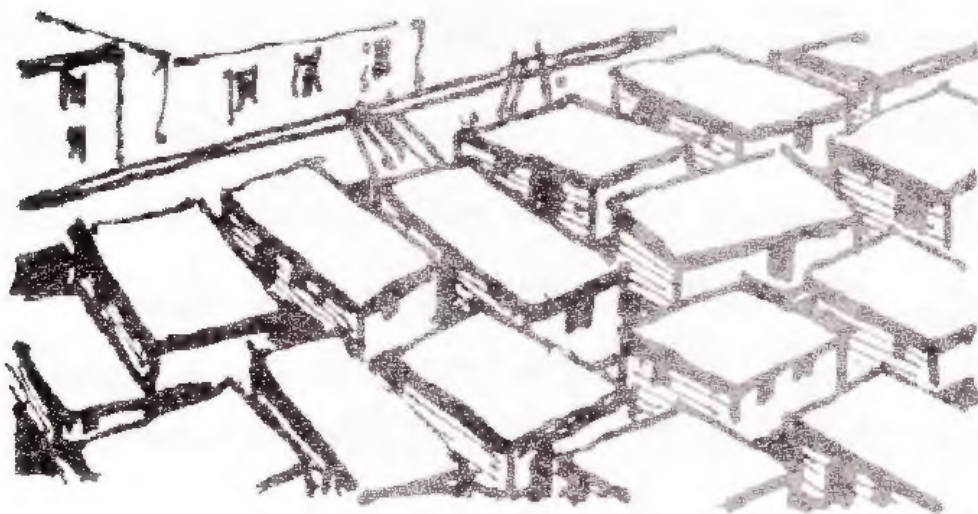
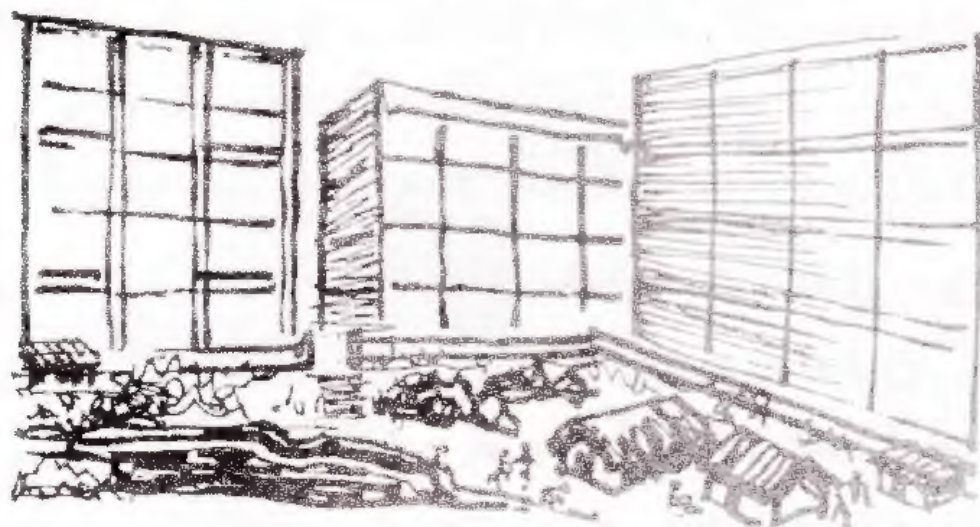
PLANNERS, ARCHITECTS,  
BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS;  
OUR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.  
AND THOSE IN AUTHORITY, AND  
ALL OF US WHO PASS BY  
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE  
ROAD & PRETEND THAT A  
SLUM IS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS.

**A SLUM** SHOULD NOT  
JUST BE PATCHED UP, OR  
HIDDEN BEHIND BIG HIGH  
POSTERS SO THAT VISITERS &  
PASSERS-BY CANT SEE IT.

**A SLUM** & ITS PEOPLE  
MUST NOT just be pushed  
to another waste place to  
become ANOTHER NEW  
SLUM !

**A SLUM** MUST NOT  
be 'converted' into a cement  
block replica, identical in  
planning & services to the  
old original slum.





**A SLUM** is probably where it now is because there was 'waste', 'difficult', 'dirty', 'unusable' patch of land which was

a tucked away between and behind 'desirable', 'prime' good city property which, for some reason or other, is lying unused. & set aside for some

Government Scheme but those in authority had retired, or been moved, & people had forgotten what the 'improvement' scheme was, or money for such a scheme had not materialised.

& covered or crossed by sewage & drainage channels & ponds & is unapproachable.



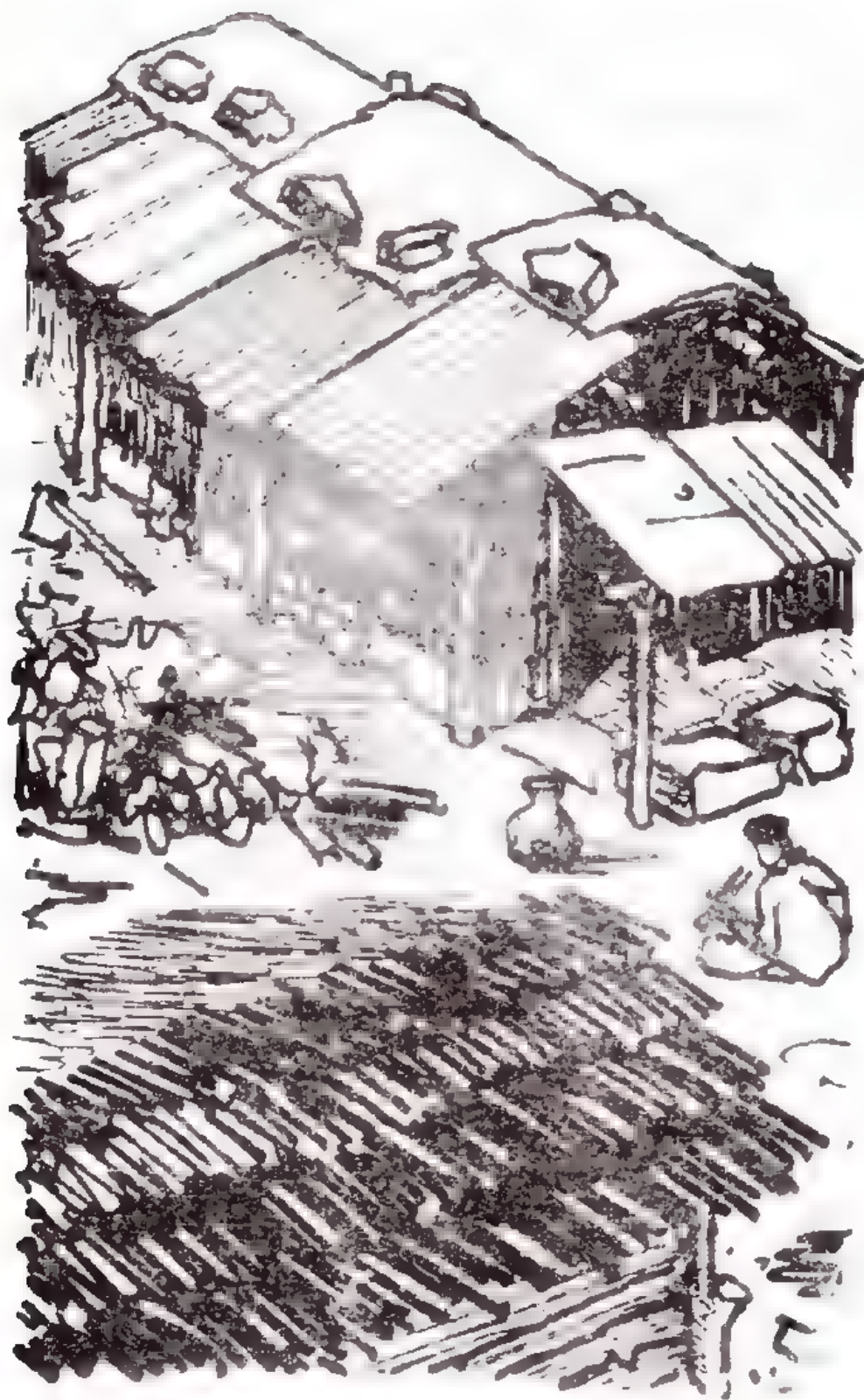


## HOMELESS, JOBLESS

people had moved in and built for themselves shacks and huts from waste materials — rusty tin sheets, broken asbestos sheets, rotten poles & branches, even just sacks & boxes & of course, all manner of plastic bags & containers.

Now they were close to casual employment & near to busy business people who needed others to do their dirty work for them.

they could also be close to each other for company and protection.





Soon 'friends' & their families, 'accomplices', jobless people from distant villages, joined them, & in no time, the whole 'waste piece of land' got completely filled up with these shacks & huts. Barely room to walk between them. No paths or open spaces: no water & certainly no drinking water! no lights & no sanitation. And if there had originally been any trees or bushes these would have been torn down & used, either for 'building' or for firewood. Very quickly GREEN had become a forgotten Colony.

They have not been asked to leave — people have become frightened of them. Many have become the "helpers" of Union & Political people who find it useful to have nearby available manpower. This is only one side of the people who have had no option but to settle & live in a slum.

Many of them become desirable EXPERTS — valuable, desirable & necessary workers who get skilled at jobs that most people dislike doing or simply will NOT DO.

And so our Slum friends become expert scavengers, & are often valuable, desirable fellow citizens.

They not only clean and clear away our waste & rubbish.

They **EXPERTLY** SORT IT out into many different categories of materials that can be recycled.

Paper can be made into bags & containers, or it can be recycled into 'new', fashionable, beautiful 'hand made' paper & card for Birthday, Christmas, wedding & Greeting cards.

There are many waste metals (Toothpaste & ointment tubes) which can also be recycled.

Rags & Cloth & plastic also fetch a price. Glass can be melted down & used again by glass manufacturers.



Our slum dwellers do all this (or many other) sort of work for which they get enough money to live on —

**AND** it is all done to OUR advantage & use.

We accuse them, unjustly, of being criminals and parasites, & they have to put up with being called such words as 'Scum', 'Worthless', 'parasites' etc. Their children don't go to school. They get teased & laughed at by 'respectable' children & adults & are not fashionable to marry & have labours, they make very little. Their parents in this sort of scavenging occupation.

After doing all this for the benefit of the 'employed' 'well-off', 'respectable' community, surely we should do something to provide them with not only facilities for them to do this recycling work etc, but also homes, with ordinary "essential services" like water, light, education & health, & workshops in which they can be trained & do all this sorting & recycling in hygienic conditions.

In other words - should we not **DESTROY** our slums, but **RE-CYCLE** them?

Most of us live in pukka houses or flats which have a back yard, or a garden, or a balcony or flat roof for 'out-door' occupations AND enjoyment - Clothes drying - children playing - keeping pets & even animals & birds for food & eggs & milk etc. Many also grow plants - flowers, vegetables, colourful shrubs & so on.

Do our slum-dwelling fellow human beings have any of these facilities & enjoyments?

The answer is, mainly, a plain, big, **NO**, & one of the ways in which we can honourably "go into the next millennium" is for **US** to **DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT**



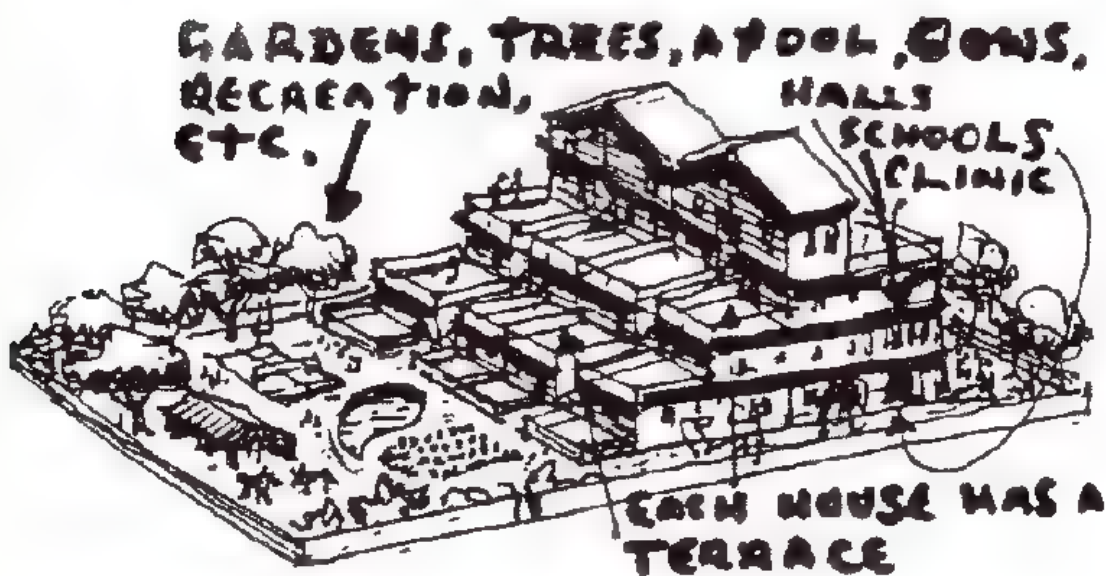
A crowded slum is a hazard and a threat, not only to those who live in it but to the health of the whole neighborhood.

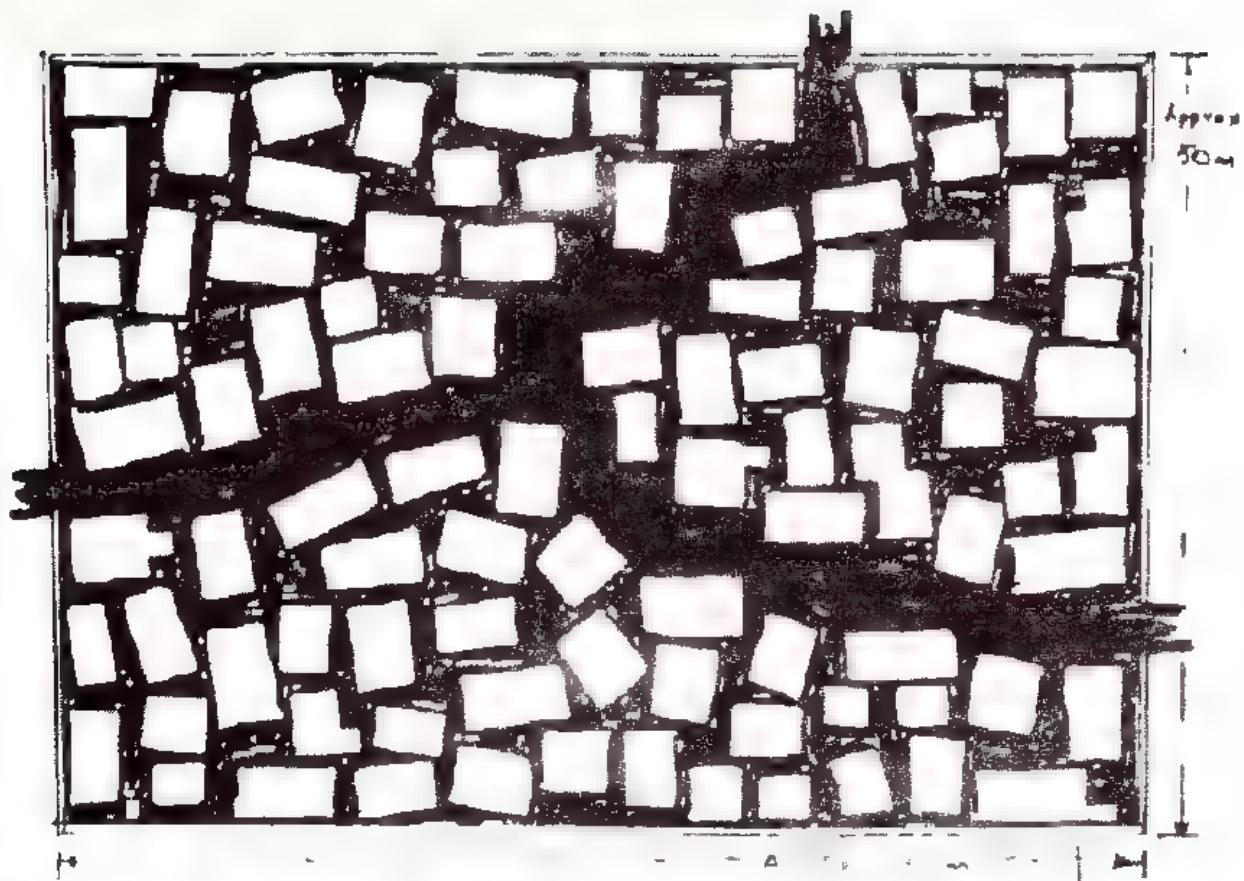
The main reason for clearing the site & rebuilding the same number of homes, but in well constructed 3 or 4 tiered blocks (as illustrated) is not only to provide proper housing but also to give an open space within a crowded city area to act as "lungs" to allow all the citizens to breathe — free from Toxic fumes from traffic etc.

For those who will live in the newly built houses there will need to be some open land where they can

work & play. They can keep cows for milk (for themselves & to sell to others) & they can grow fruits & vegetables, also for themselves & for others.

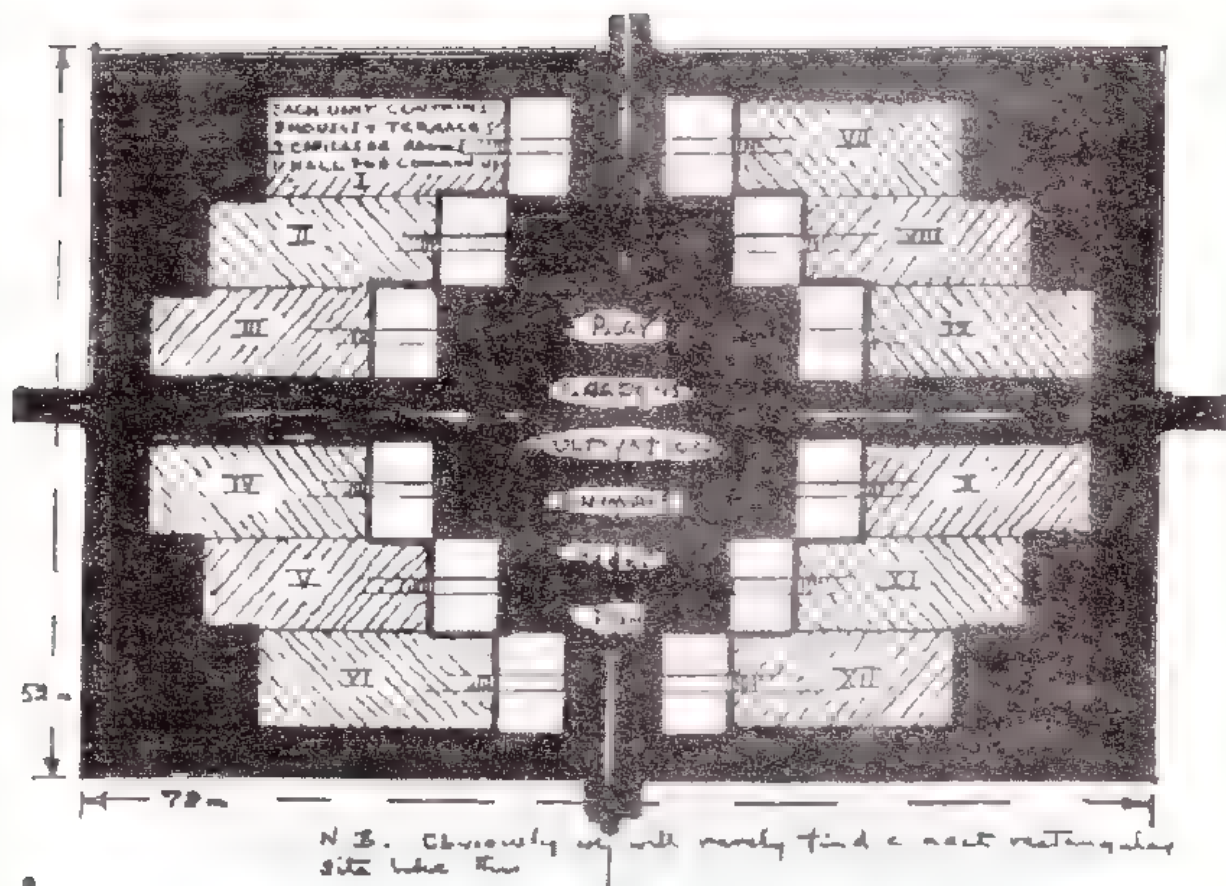
The retrieved open land is for THE BENEFIT OF ALL — & is NOT for the wealthy to build even greater horrors than those pulled down — merely to make themselves more wealthy.



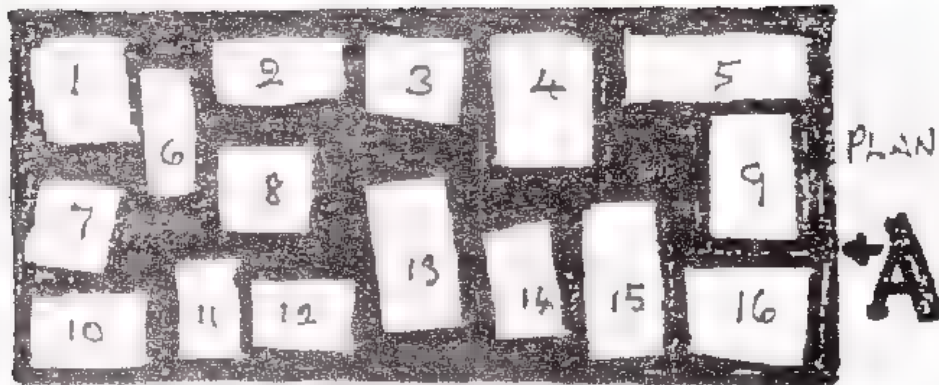


This is a rough plan of an actual slum. There were three "colonies", together having a total of about 100 shacks. The area covered was nearly one acre (about 80m x 50m).

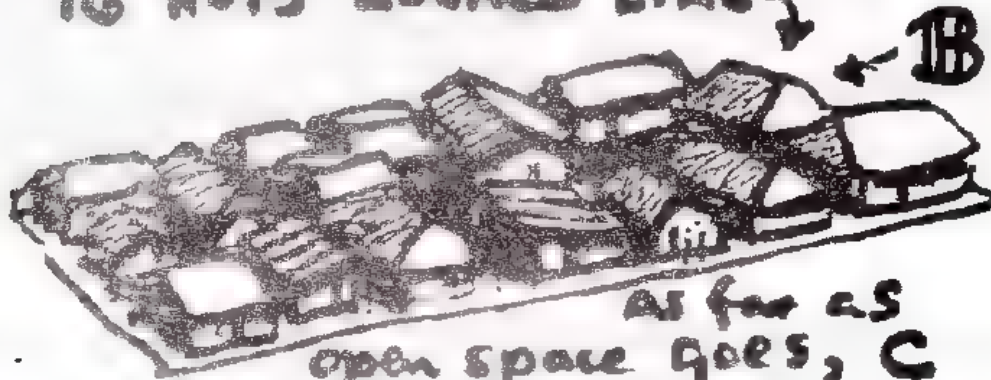




This plan shows a site the same area (about 1 acre) as the actual slum (opposite). Here are the same number of houses (stepped blocks) plus extra rooms & halls AND a lot of public open space.



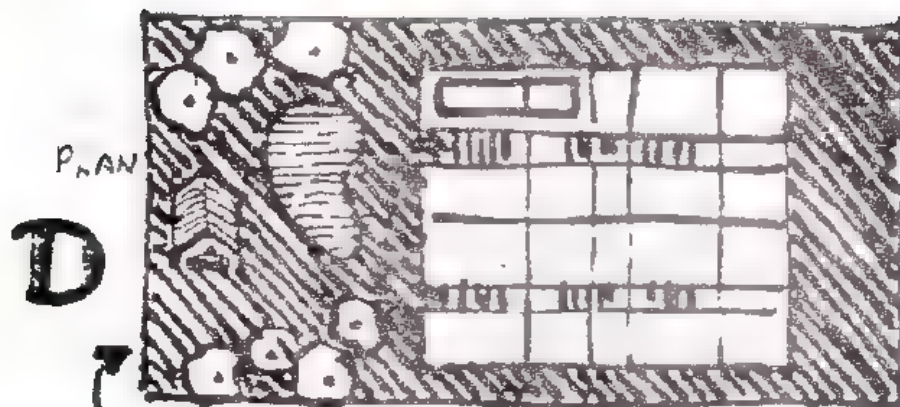
THESE ARE A TYPICAL  
SIXTEEN SLUM SHACKS (PLAN)  
THIS IS WHAT THE ORIGINAL  
16 HUTS LOOKED LIKE →



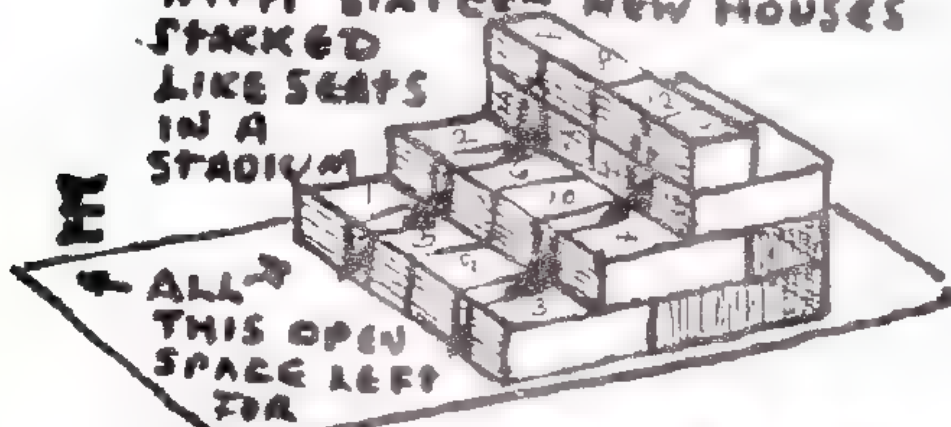
AS FAR AS  
open space goes, C  
is no better than the original

GOVT. STYLE REPLACEMENT  
HERE THEY ARE REPLACED  
BY SIXTEEN NEW HOUSES ON  
THE SAME SITE.

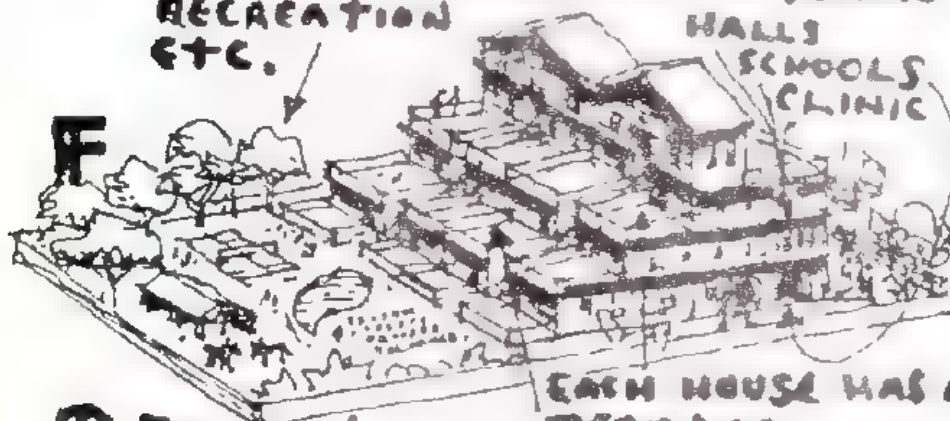




HERE IS THE SAME SITE  
WITH SIXTEEN NEW HOUSES  
STACKED  
LIKE SEATS  
IN A  
STADIUM



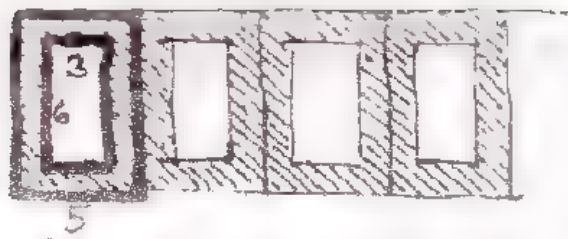
GARDENS, TREES, A POOL, GOLF  
RECREATION  
ETC.



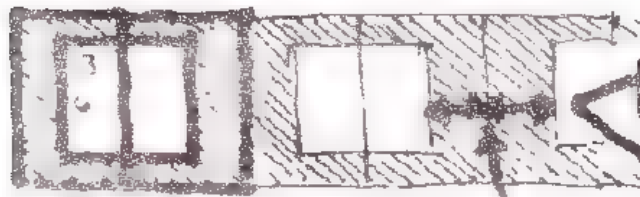
EACH HOUSE HAS A  
TERRACE

**D, E & F** show  
The same number, but better bldgs  
and a lot of open space

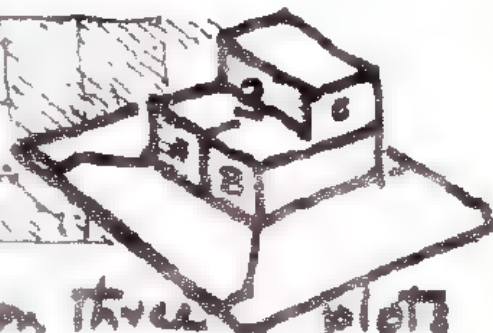
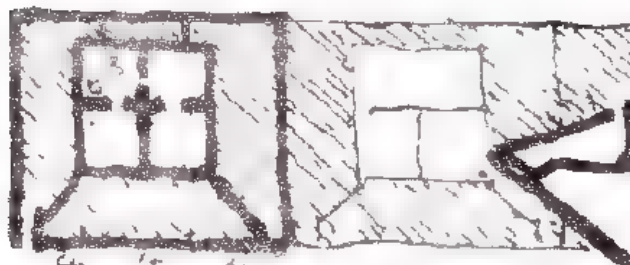




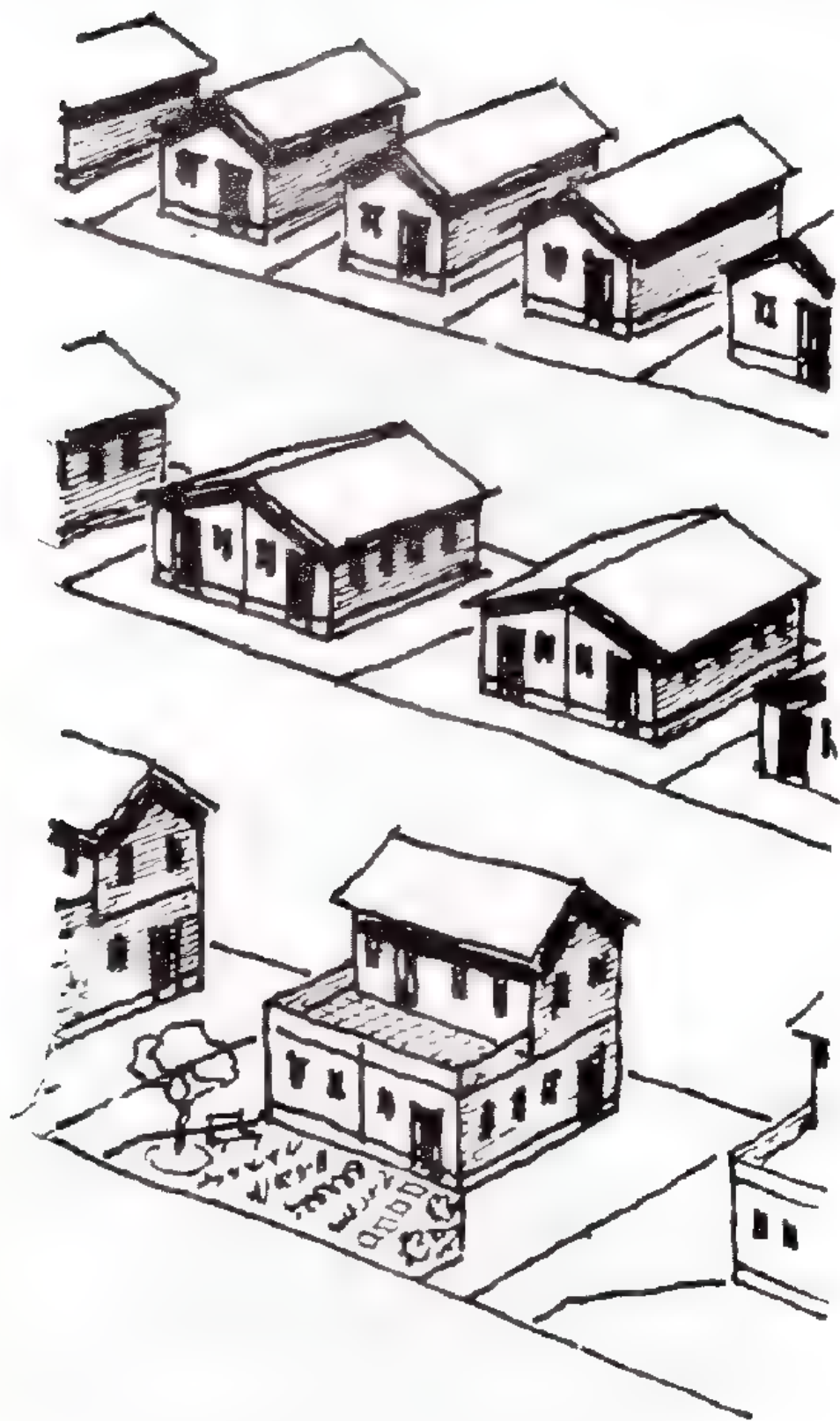
The smallest house ( $6m \times 3m$ ) on the smallest piece of land ( $8m \times 8m$ ) gives almost no land for garden etc.



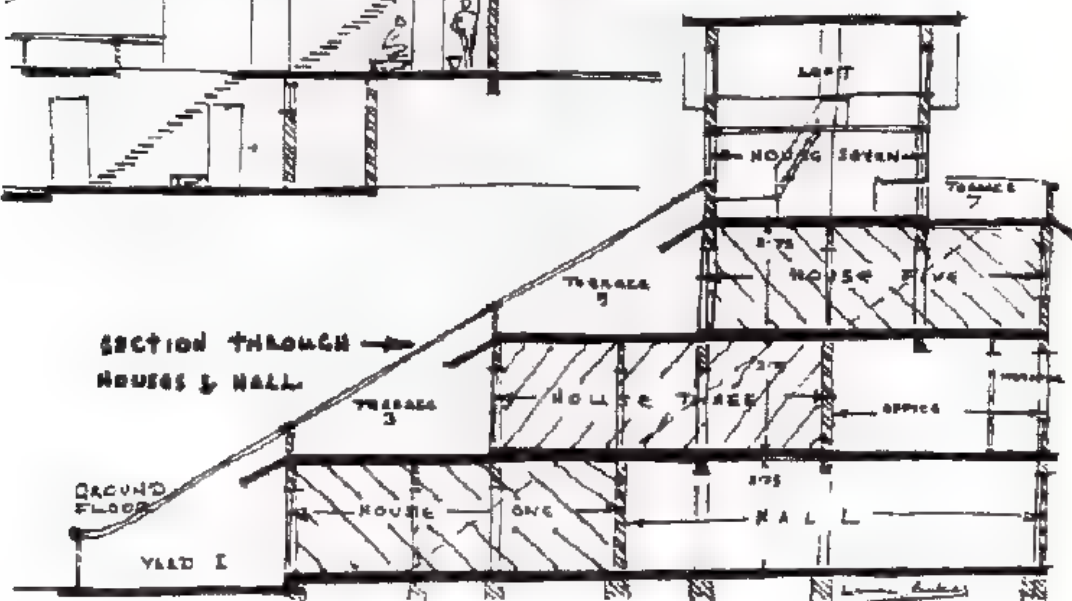
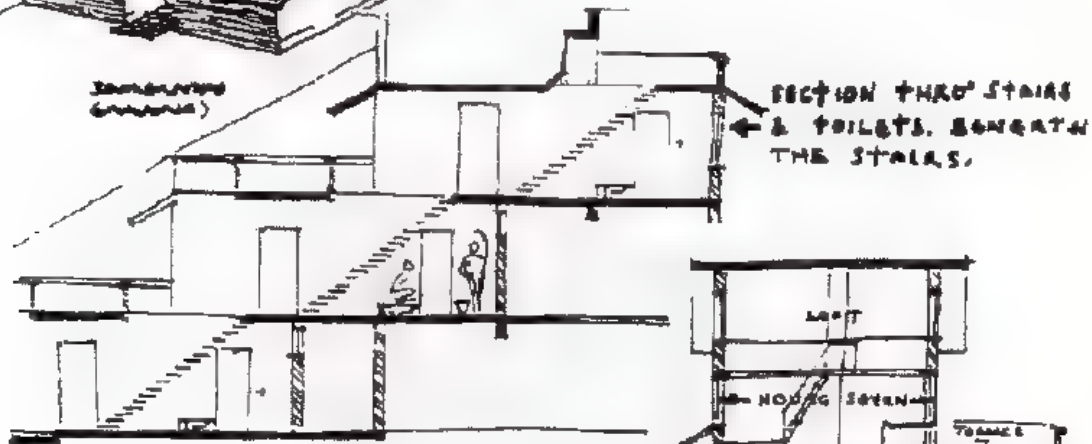
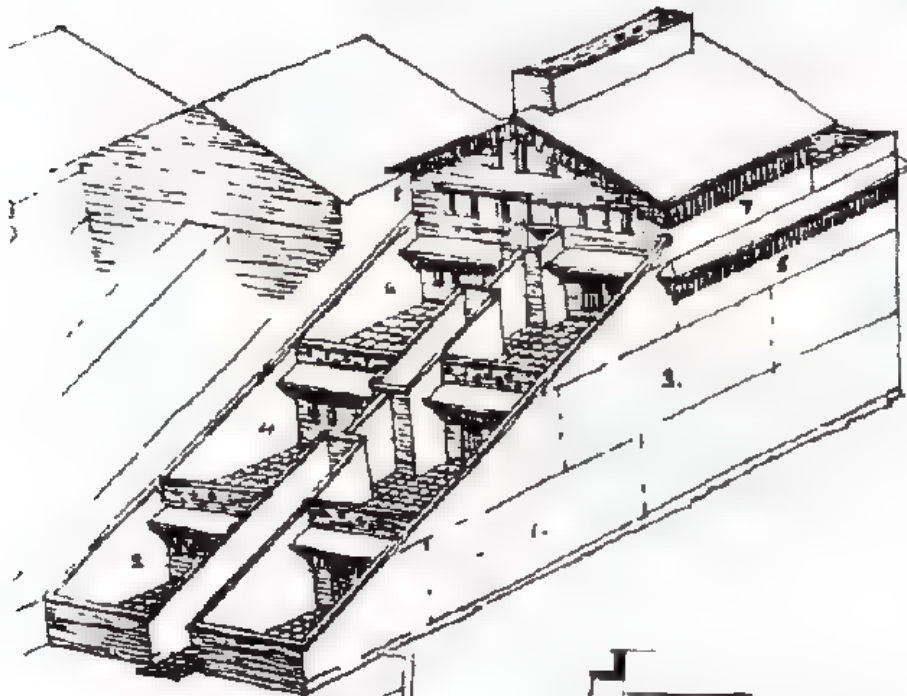
Two houses with a common wall leaves more land for planting, play, animal keeping, etc.



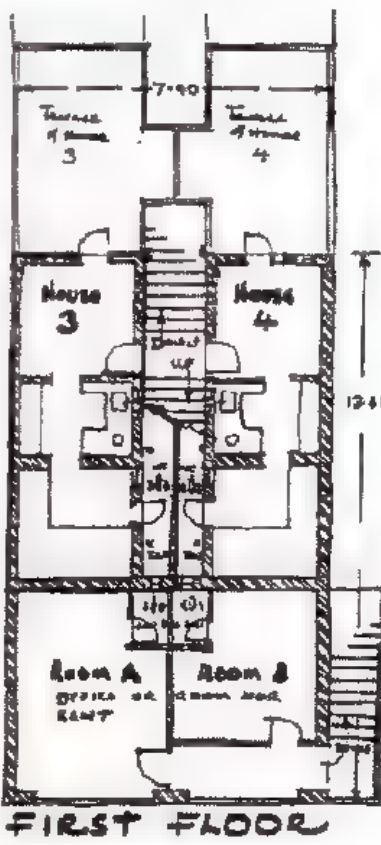
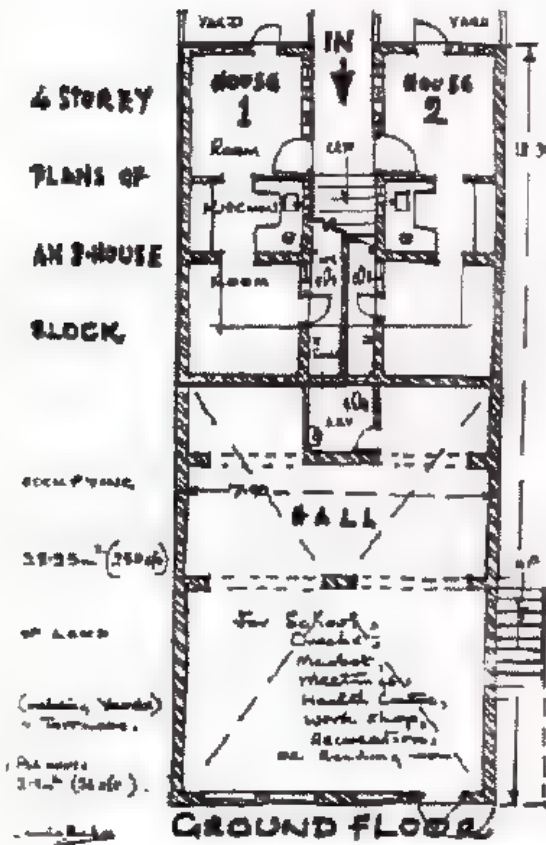
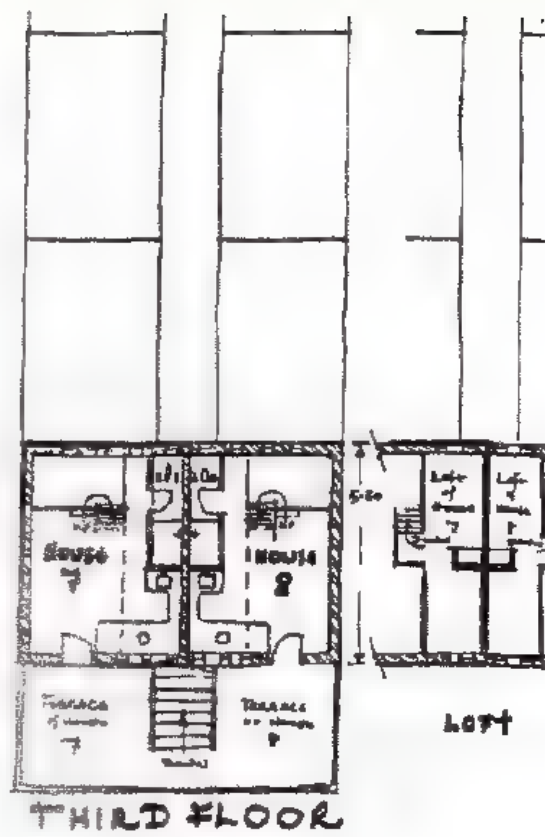
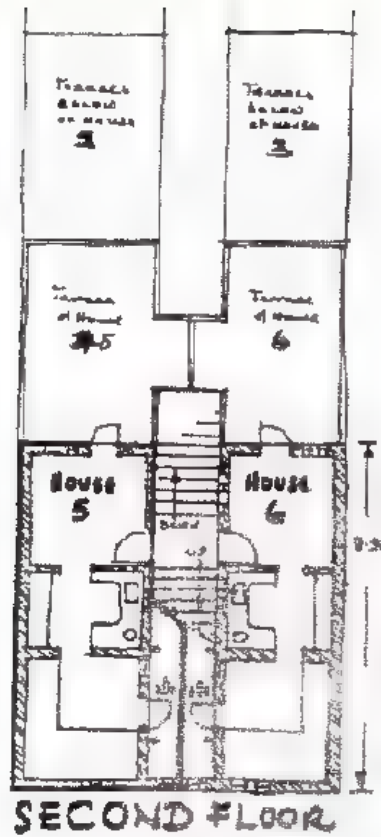
Three houses on three plots leaves much more useable land for each house. This also gives a feeling of OPEN SPACE, almost always missing in all slums.



# EIGHT HOUSES in a 4 storey block.

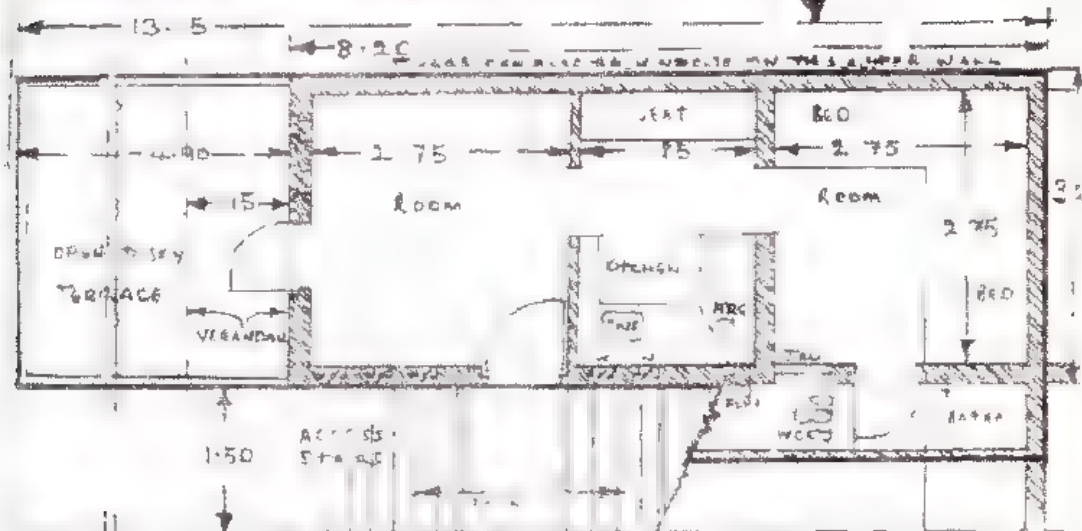






This is a possible typical HOUSE unit

PLAN

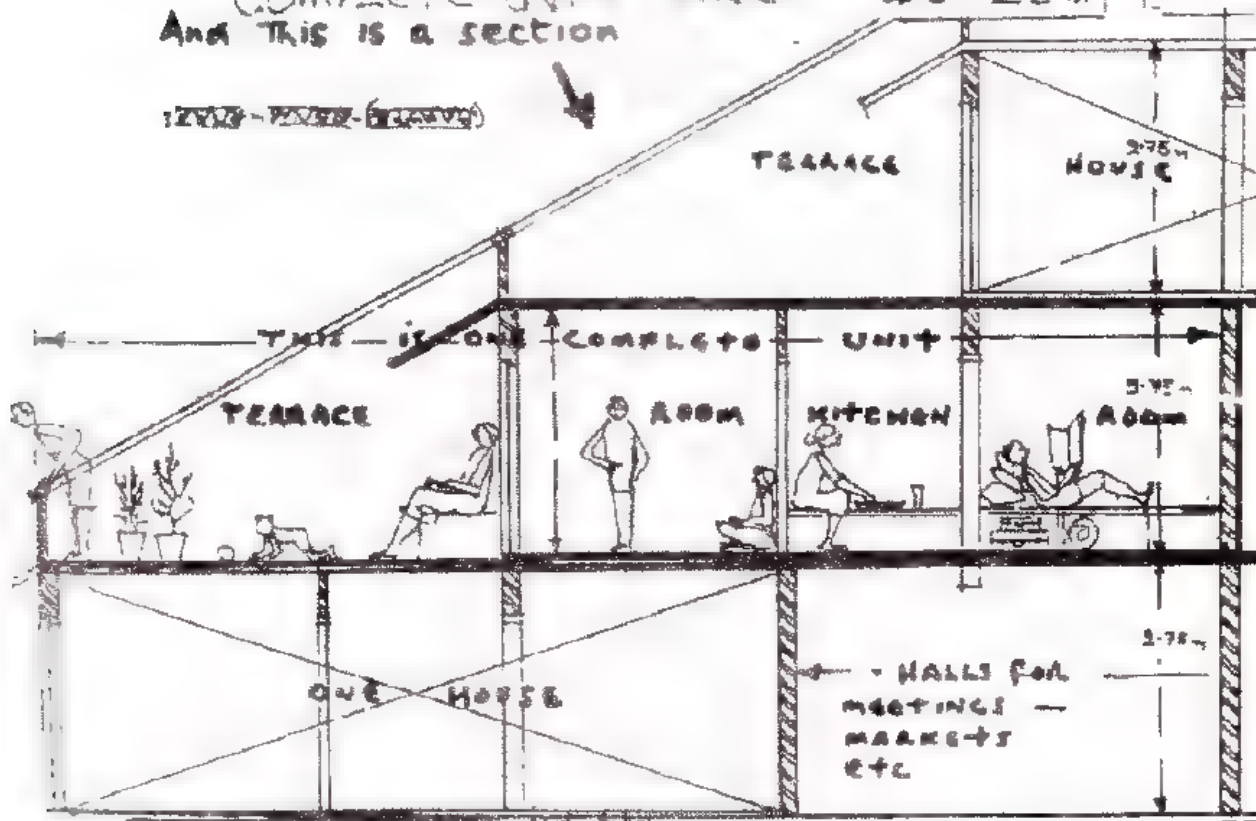


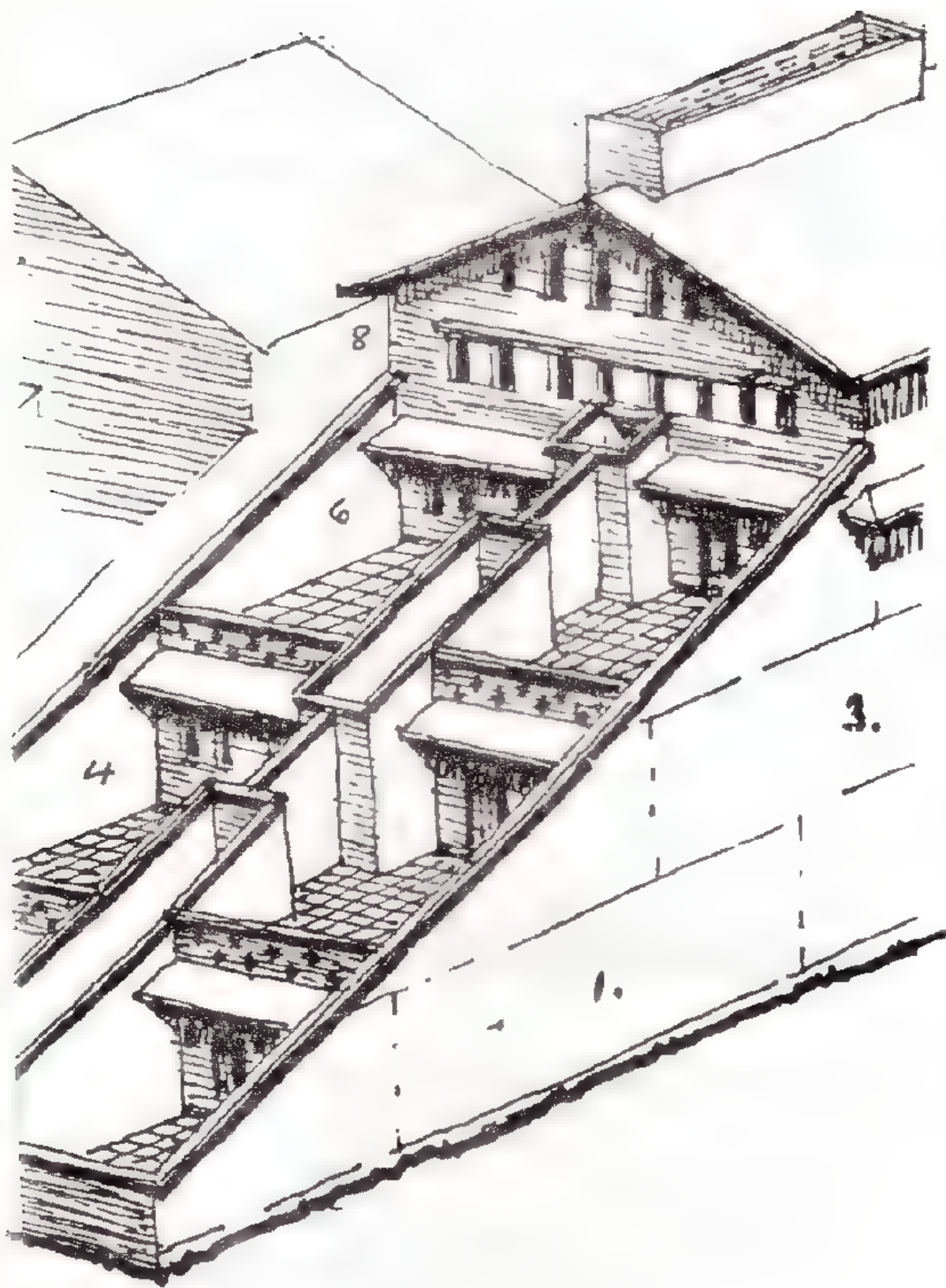
CARPET AREA	20.50 m <sup>2</sup>	225 sq ft
HOUSE AREA	26.25 m <sup>2</sup>	280 sq ft
TERRACE + LAUNDRY AREA	20.00 m <sup>2</sup>	215 sq ft

COMPLETE UNIT AREA 46.25 m<sup>2</sup> 500 sq ft

And this is a section

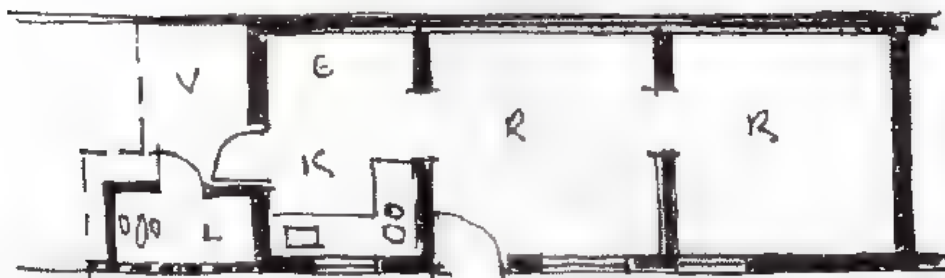
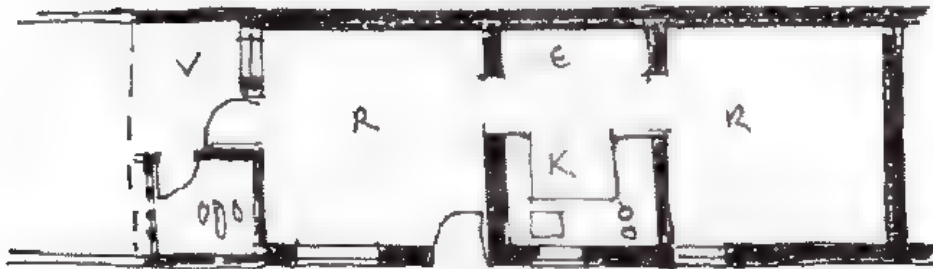
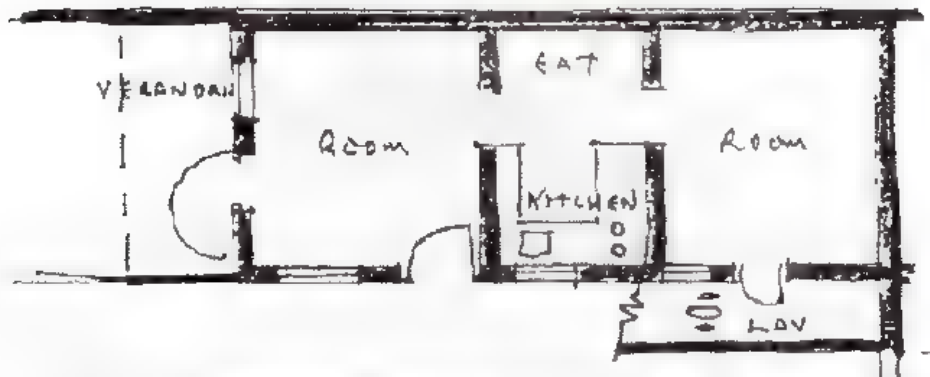
12.00 - 12.00 - 12.00



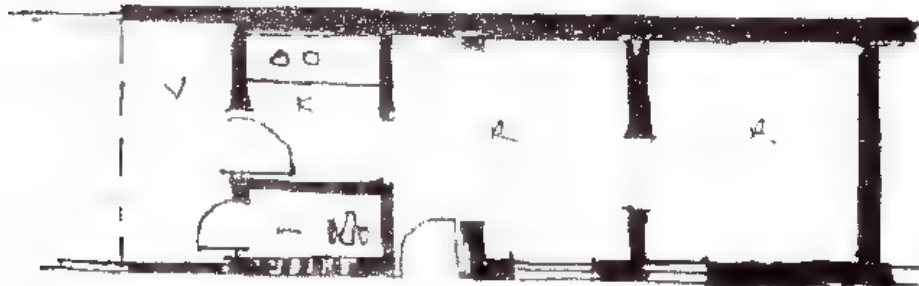




Altho' all the B house plans in a block are the same over-all area, the arrangement of rooms can vary.



In each plan there are 2 main rooms  
 the position & size of the kitchen &  
 the Toilet can vary according to  
 the wishes of the occupant.

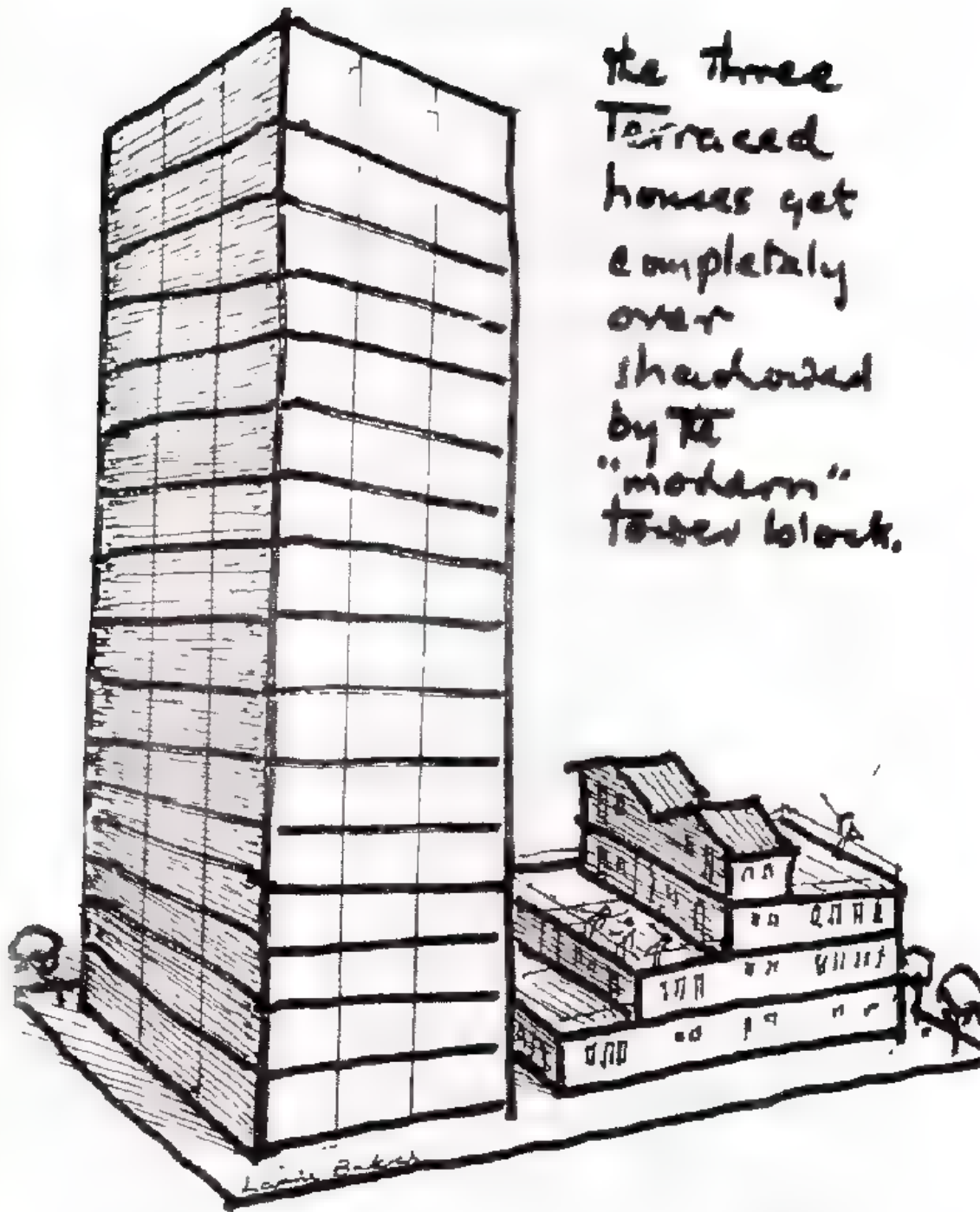


Slums naturally vary in size.  
In our large metropolitan cities  
the slums are often very big &  
one can easily get lost in them.  
In smaller towns the slums  
are correspondingly smaller.  
However, in view of the stigma  
that has attached itself to  
slum dwellers it is important,  
anyway until the country has  
changed its attitudes towards  
slums, that, along with the  
planning, to give more usable  
open space, & the conversion of  
ramshackle huts to proper  
durable buildings, some  
single, appropriately sized



Other buildings or rooms are necessary. We cannot expect, as one example, city schools to change overnight their attitude to ill-dressed & perhaps ill-mannered school age children. There are many Voluntary Agencies who would be willing to run nurseries, 'crèches', preschool classes for very young children so that they will be ready to enter into the mainstream school at the appropriate age. Workshops & stores for all the recycling possibilities would solve a lot of problems. Similarly a small health centre would not only attend to the health of the dwellers but also prevent the spread of diseases.

the sketch F  
must not be  
allowed to  
become this! →  
If it does,  
we are merely  
converting a  
mud & tin  
Slum into a  
concrete one.  
We've made the  
mistake of keeping  
Nature out of  
cities. Are we  
foolish enough  
to go on doing it?





THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • THURSDAY • SEPTEMBER 30, 1999

**BRIEFS**

**Evacuate slum dwellers: HC**

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has ordered eviction of about 5,000 slum dwellers near the New Delhi railway station for expansion of rail tracks. The court directed officials to evacuate them by December 1 and if required use police force. The court was hearing a PIL filed by 'Dainik Railway Yatri Sangh'. PTI

Let us hope that their Lordships told the five thousand slum dwellers where to evacuate to !

I of course do not know details about this case, nor do I know the circumstances leading to this High Court order & obviously, if people have squatted on Railway land and now the time has come to expand the rail tracks — they have to be moved.

I merely show this newspaper cutting for you to see the apparent lack of concern for these 5000 slum dwellers. They must be off the land — with or without Police force (!) in 30 days time! If you were one of these 5000, can you imagine your feelings? 30 days to find another home for you & your family & probably you have no money anyway.

Some of the sketch plans for recycled slum houses shown in these pages can easily include such 'extras' at very little extra cost.

It is worth pointing out now that the typical traditional house plans all over India nearly all consist, not of just a house — but a whole 'Compound' — however small, as the 'habitat' of a family. The 'House' is often merely a sleeping place, & a bad weather shelter & a stove! Cooking, Occupations, Play, Animals, Storage of fuel & fodder — all take place in an enclosed compound.



Of course, I can almost hear you saying "Fine! Fine! Marvellous ideas! Why not give them T.V.s & Maruthi Vans while you're about it!"

But don't worry - I'm going to go on making it known that we have many millions of homeless families. It is possible, & we are at present building small houses for between Rs 20,000/- & Rs 35,000/- (I'm well aware that Construction, Labour & materials costs vary enormously all over the country.) The Head of our present Government recently gave a list of the country's priority needs.

His first priority was for a six lane highway to be built from Kachin to Kanya Kumari! I can't honestly say that I can hardly wait for the great day when I can drive—anyway on ONE lane, from my home in Trivandrum all the way to Kanyakumari.

Any way—the following pages, with tentative plans and illustrations are intended to show that all of this slum-recycling idea is not just an airy-fairy idealist intopca, but that there is no good reason why we should not start actually trying to DO something practical about it

There ARE existing  
Government (& other) departments  
who have Plans, Personnel  
& Power to deal with such  
vast problems as controlled  
water supply, electricity,  
Sanitation, Solar & bio gas  
energy, access paths & roads,  
education & health services,  
banking & insurance, Animal  
& poultry & fish breeding,  
Social forestry, agriculture  
& horticulture, Small scale  
industries and, of course  
buildings. There will be problems  
& inconveniences & existing  
vested interests — but as a  
Nation we **MUST OVERCOME**  
& the time to start overcoming  
is **NOW!**



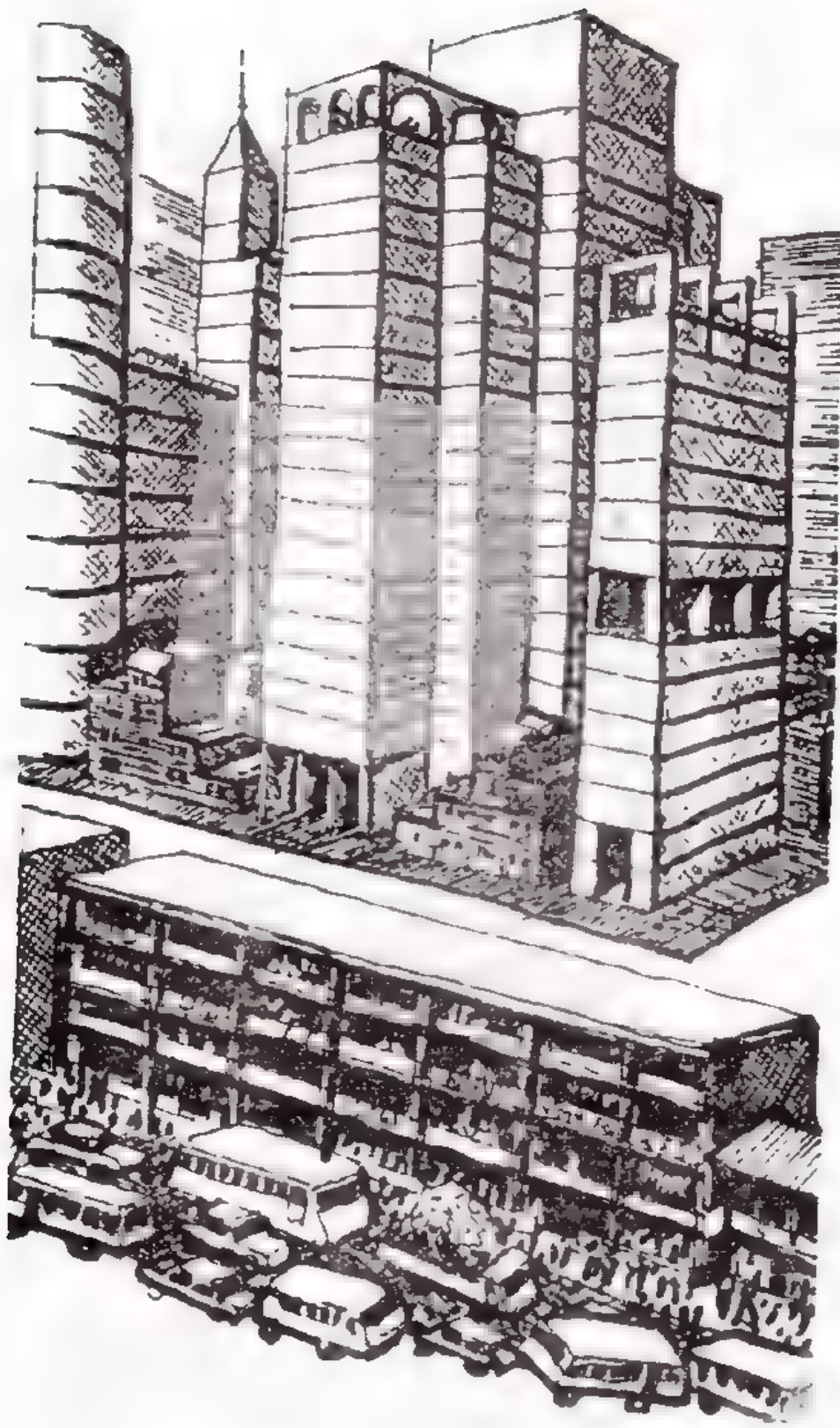
The 'Modern' Multi Storied Luxury Apartments & offices may have their attractions for the Rich People of this world, but both in their construction & in their daily use they use a disproportionate amount of power (fuel) & of scarce materials.

They also pose enormous threats such as Sanitation & "Natural Hazards" (such as earthquakes) etc.

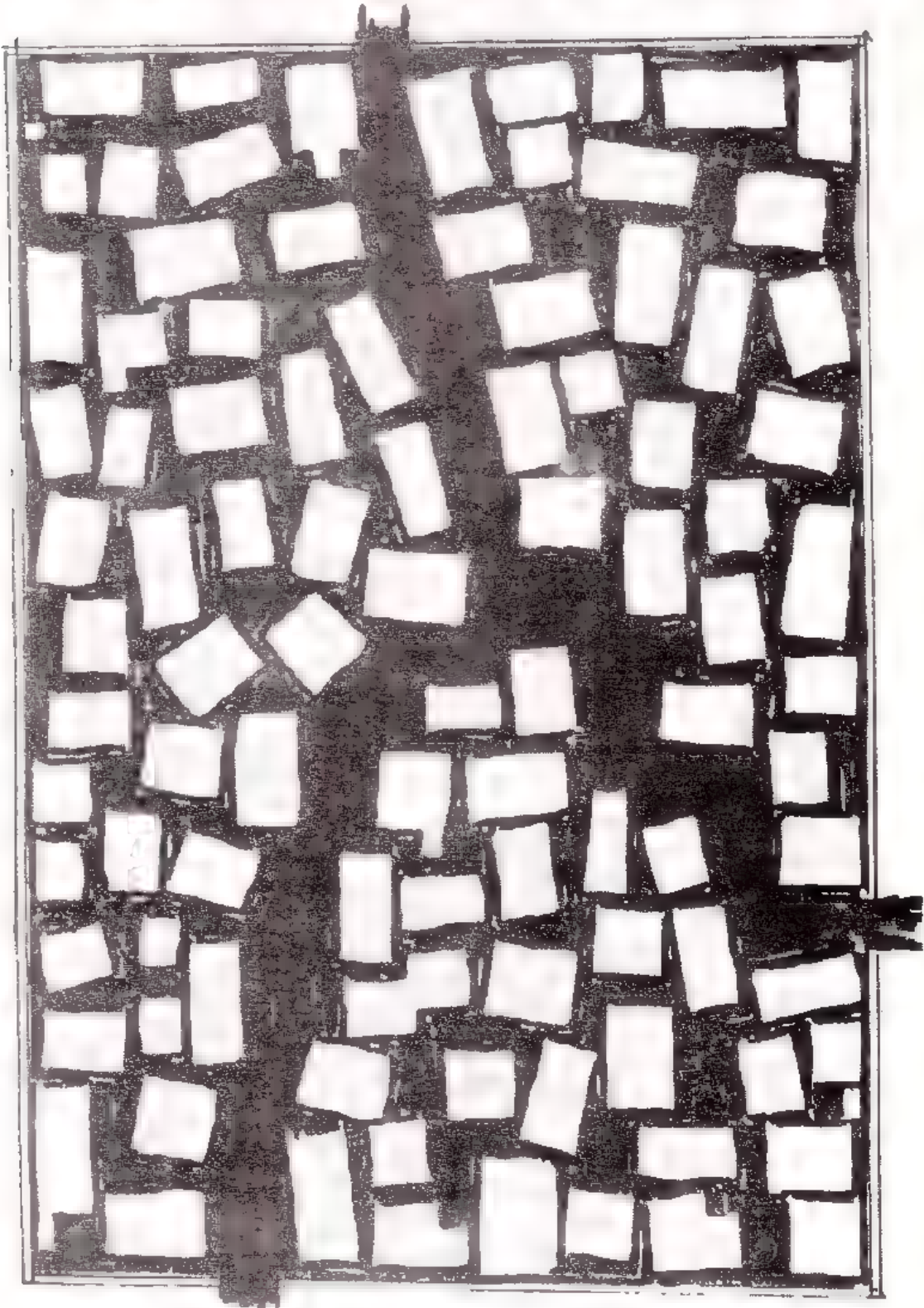
Unfortunately they are a wonderful & 'good' investment for the Rich People.

Vertical Tenements are neither practical (water, sanitation, access etc) nor acceptable to the users.

WE SHOULD HAVE LEARNED THIS LESSON FROM OUR CHAWLS!

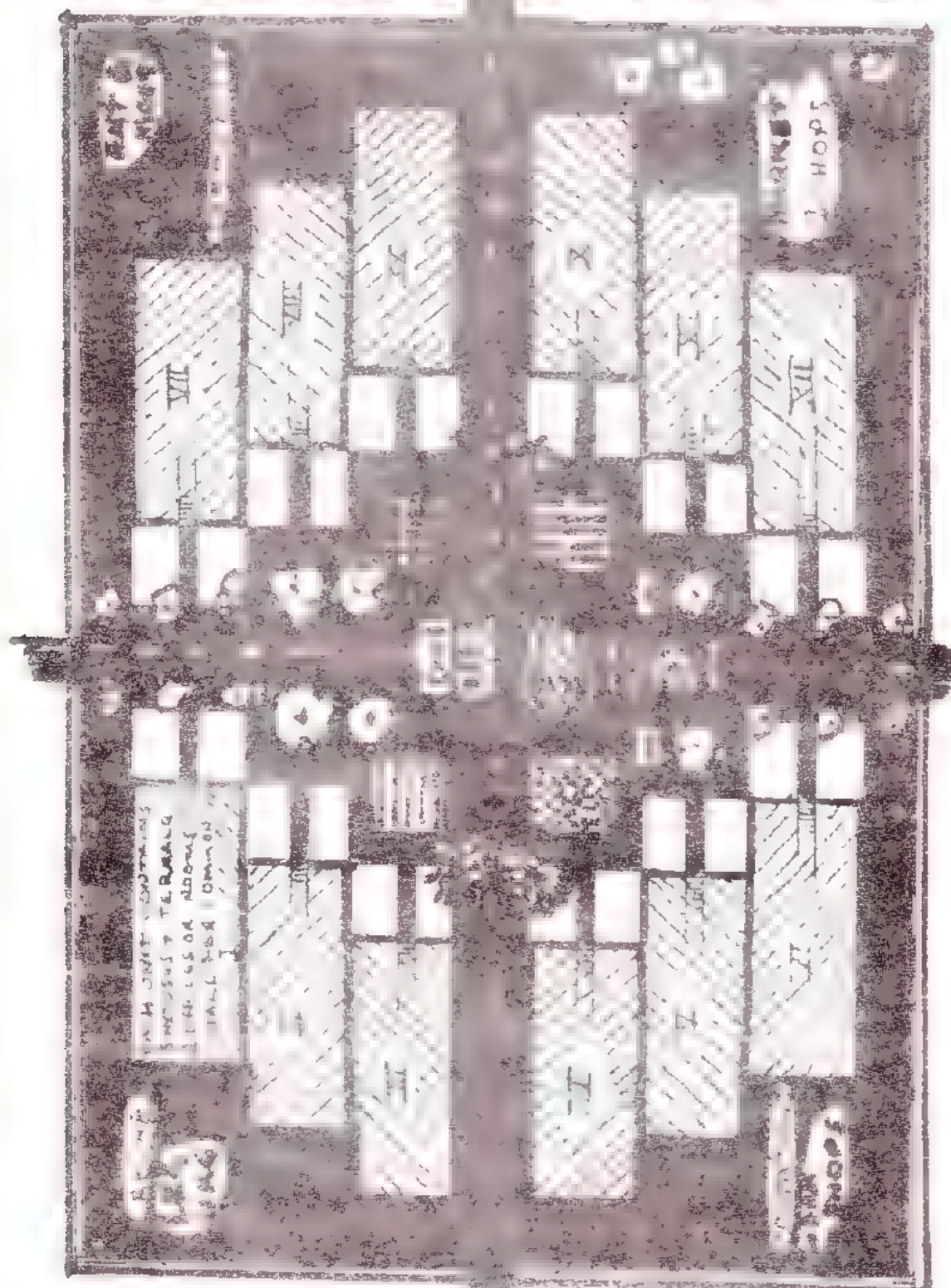


# A SLIM PLAN NOW





# SAME SLUM NEXT YEAR





RE-CYCLING  
OUR SLUMS  
should be given  
**FAR-GREATER  
PRIORITY**  
than more & more  
HIGH RISE FLATS.  
**DARE WE TELL**  
the HAVES  
to take a back seat  
for a while?

AND LET THE **NIG'S**  
(NO INCOME GROUP)

AND THE **EWS'S**  
(ECONOMICALLY WEAKER SECTION)  
HAVE A CHANCE  
TO BECOME AT  
LEAST

**LIG'S**  
(LOW INCOME GROUP)

Lewis, B.

# SLUMS

ARE A SHAME  
AND A DISGRACE  
NOT TO THOSE WHO HAVE  
TO LIVE IN ONE

BUT TO US -

PLANNERS, ARCHITECTS,  
BUILDERS & CONTRACTORS;  
OUR GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.  
AND THOSE IN AUTHORITY, AND  
ALL OF US WHO PASS BY  
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE  
ROAD & PRETEND THAT A  
SLUM IS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS.



## **COSTFORD**

The Centre of Science and Technology for Rural Development known by its acronym **COSTFORD** was established in 1985 to develop, demonstrate and disseminate alternative technologies that will ultimately change the social, economic and political positions of the poor, deprived and marginalized sections of society. The initial thrust area of the activities of **COSTFORD** was the diffusion of cost and energy effective alternatives to building technology. In consideration of the commendable work done by **COSTFORD**, the Government of Kerala has recognized it as an accredited agency to execute construction works using alternative technologies for all Government Departments and Agencies. Hundreds of architects and engineers trained by **COSTFORD** in Baker philosophy have become the change agents in the construction sector. It also gives special emphasis to the needs of women in society through training, organization and employment generation schemes.

**COSTFORD** extends consultancy services to Panchayati Raj Institutes for local economic development, decentralized planning and governance.

Besides, **COSTFORD** has also been interacting with students from various disciplines and has created a library and research centre on subjects that are relevant from the point of people-centred development. Annual memorial lectures by eminent public personalities and intellectuals are organised to commemorate the contributions of C. Achutha Menon, K.N. Raj and Laurie Baker. Special lectures and classes are also conducted on themes of topical interest.

**COSTFORD** has constructed a large number of buildings including houses for government and non-government institutions and families. In its quest to carry on the legacy of Laurie Baker, it has also been experimenting with alternative cost effective but environmentally-friendly materials such as bamboo, mud and wood. It has won several prizes and awards for its construction activities. More details can be accessed from its website: [www.costford.org](http://www.costford.org)

**COSTFORD** has published 12 books authored by Laurie Baker and 30 books authored by others. A Malayalam quarterly "Puthuvazhi" is being published under its initiative to promote and popularize alternative perspectives on development, environment, gender, social oppression and culture.

### **LBC for Habitat Studies**

The Laurie Baker Centre for Habitat Studies was established in 2009 to carry on the legacy of Laurie Baker. Located 12 kms from Trivandrum city in a lush campus of around 4 acres in the Vilappilsala Panchayat, it conducts training, research and publication activities. More details can be accessed from its website: [www.lauriebakercentre.org](http://www.lauriebakercentre.org)



## **COSTFORD**

Registered Office

Ayyanthole, Thrissur, Kerala - 680 003

costfordayyanthole@gmail.com

+91 487 2365 988, 2366 388; Fax: +91 487 2366 388

### **COSTFORD Sub Centres**

<b>Thiruvananthapuram</b>	'The Hamlet', Nalanchira P.O, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 015 costfordtvm@gmail.com +91 471 2530 031, +91 94465 57820
<b>Kollam</b>	TD. Nagar-103, High School Junction, Kachery P.O., Kollam - 691 013 costfordkollam@gmail.com +91 474 2796 493, +91 94957 00298
<b>Alappuzha</b>	'Laxmi', Mullackal P.O, Alappuzha - 688 010 costfordalpy@yahoo.com +91 93498 37016
<b>Kochi</b>	House No. 44/965, Pavakulam Lane, Near Post Office, Kaloor, Kochi -682 017 costfordekm@gmail.com +91 94470 46849
<b>Thrissur</b>	Thrissur District Centre, Ayyanthole, Thrissur - 680 003 +91 487 2365 988, +91 94463 24369
<b>Triprayar</b>	Sree Rama Polytechnic, Valapad P.O, Thrissur - 680 567 costfordtpr@gmail.com +91 94473 91526
<b>Shornur</b>	Gurunilayalam, Opp. Suma Theatre, Shornur - 679 121 nanducostford@gmail.com +91 94477 33853
<b>Palakkad</b>	"Lakshana", Puthur, Palakkad -678 001 +91 94478 39161
<b>Ponnani</b>	Near Thrikkavu Temple, P.O Ponnani, Malappuram -679 577 +91 94475 27349
<b>Malappuram</b>	"Govindam", Dr. Shaju Road, MSPLP School, Malappuram - costfordmpm2010@gmail.com +91 94477 78356
<b>Kozhikode</b>	Puthenpurayil, Edakkadu P.O, Kozhikode - ragamcafe123@gmail.com +91 97475 02284

## THE AUTHOR

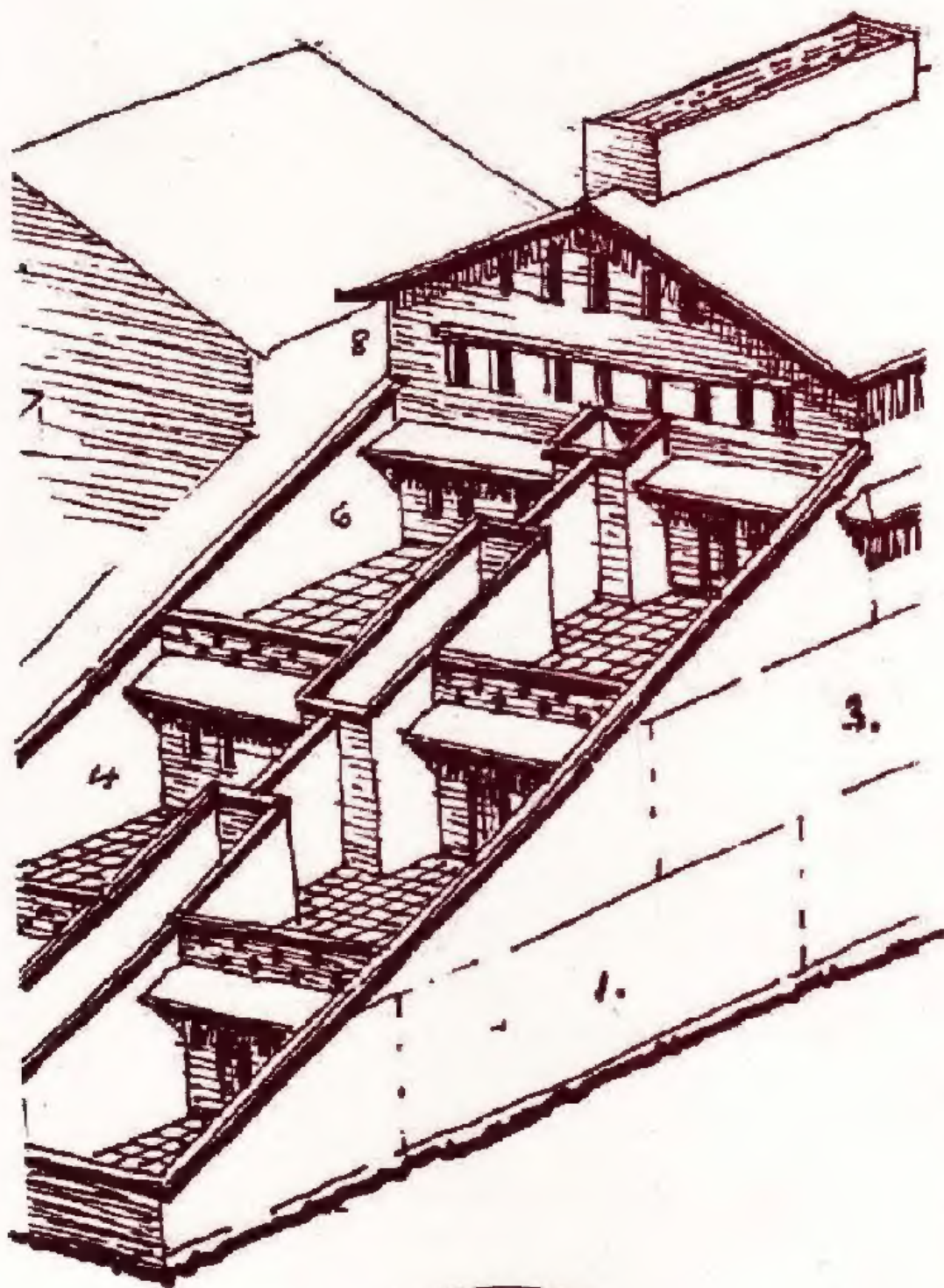
Laurence Wilfred Baker was not just a well-known architect. He was also a cartoonist, a man who loved nature and above all, a humanist. He was a Gandhian in his thoughts and deeds. Born in 1917 he became an Associate of the Royal Institute of Architects in the United Kingdom after studying at the Birmingham School of Architecture. A chance meeting with Mahatma Gandhi inspired and introduced him into India in 1944. Following this he lived and worked in India helping his Kerala-born wife and medical doctor Elizabeth Baker and also practicing his architecture in meeting the housing and living requirements of the rural poor. It was in a remote village, Pithoragarh, in the Himalayan region where they built their home, hospital and school. In the mid-sixties the Bakers moved to Kerala and made it their home.



After moving to the city of Trivandrum in 1970, Baker built several buildings including numerous houses and institutions that were cost effective as well as environment-friendly. The late C. Achutha Menon, the visionary Chief Minister of Kerala during 1969-77 was an admirer and ardent supporter of Baker's philosophy and approach to building construction. So was the late K.N. Raj, one of India's outstanding economists. Baker was closely associated with several governmental and other public institutions to advise on matters relating to cost effective building technology. He also mentored a large number of young architects who came to work and live in Trivandrum. He authored several books imparting knowledge on housing and building construction. He also drew cartoons and was also a painter. He and his wife led a life of simplicity and service. Laurie Baker passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

There are two organizations that carry on his legacy. One is the Centre of Science and Technology for Rural Development known as COSTFORD headquartered in Thrissur with units in Trivandrum and other districts in Kerala. This was jointly founded by C. Achutha Menon, K.N. Raj and Laurie Baker himself in 1985. The other is the Laurie Baker Centre for Habitat Studies located in Trivandrum and founded in 2009 under the initiative of COSTFORD activists with financial support from the Government of Kerala to undertake training, research, publication and other activities relating to the building of a green habitat following the philosophy and approach of Laurie Baker.





**COSTFORD**

Centre of Science and Technology For Rural Development